



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

KATHY BERNIER

Testimony on Senate Bill 644

Senate Committee on Energy, Consumer Protection and Government Reform
Tuesday, March 4, 2014

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Committee Members for holding this Public Hearing. I'd like to thank Senator Cowles for authoring this bill in the Senate and for the opportunity to speak in favor of SB 644 today.

I will speak to the intent of SB 644 so that you may better understand the need for clarification of the County Clerk's duties and responsibilities.

First, I would like to discuss an historical perspective for the position of the County Clerk and Constitutional Officers in general. Second, I will give clear examples why county government checks and balances are essential for county governance and how the county clerk fits into that. Finally, I will address a few specific provisions in the bill.

The Wisconsin Constitution is reflective of our Federal Constitution as designed by our founders to create checks and balances throughout our Republican form of government. The Wisconsin Constitution is one of only a few state constitutions that have not been re-written. Authors such as Rufus King II - a key author and signer of the Wisconsin Constitution, whose grandfather was an author and signer of the U.S. Constitution - took great pains to get it right the first time. Our State Constitution was well thought out and county constitutional officers were not a mistake.

Article VI of the Wisconsin Constitution authorizes county constitutional officers. The title of Article VI is "Administrative" and it is a word that we need to make note of. The County Clerk is and will continue to be an important aspect of the administrative functions of county government.

There are other individuals and departments that have taken on the roles and responsibilities that historically, and I would argue rightfully, belong with the County Clerk. Duties and authority of the Clerk have been shifted by direction of County Boards, by County Administrators and through the budgeting process by eliminating Clerk's office staff.

Our founding fathers warned that if one office gives up its power and authority another office will take up that power and authority, tipping the balance of power as laid out in our constitution. Today, more and more county boards are taking responsibilities away from the County Clerk and giving them to county board staff and other department staff, such as administration departments.

It is crucial that the county clerks continue to be responsive to the needs of county boards and yet remain autonomous to serve the county citizenry, which includes providing key checks and balances.

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This bill was crafted with input from the Wisconsin County Clerks Association (WCCA) and the Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) to come to agreement on a vast majority of provisions. Senate Bill 644, as before you today, helps clarify and consolidate statutes governing the roles and responsibilities of county clerks. I appreciate these group's support.

Finally, I'd like to speak to a specific provision dealing with the Milwaukee County Election Commission. In every county, the clerk has the responsibility to carry out several aspects of the election processes. Milwaukee is the only county in which the county clerk does not provide the election administration function. I am not certain why this was removed from the Clerk's office. Simply put, there is no need to have a separate office - in any county - to provide the function of ballot creation, filing officer, election totals and canvassing the results, just to name a few of the primary functions. The board of canvass in each county is bi-partisan and provides this function accurately and, to the best of my knowledge they are trustworthy.

County clerks are held accountable by their citizens to carry out election duties according to their oath, and to uphold the constitution of the United States and the state of Wisconsin. Uniformly across the state, the County Clerk can and should provide oversight of the election process as they are trained by GAB and senior County Clerks.

Additional provisions in the bill include increased transparency, including contact information, for elected officials with taxing authority. These officials include school board members, technical college boards, sewage management authority and others.

Another key provision requires the record keeping be consolidated in the clerk's office. The Clerk is the primary record keeper in the county for meeting minutes and other essential county functions. This bill would require minutes and agendas be filed for record keeping purposes with the clerk.

Again, thank you for holding this hearing and for listening to my testimony in support of SB 644. I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.

STANDING COMMITTEES:

Energy, Consumer Protection, and
Government Reform, Chair

State and Federal Relations, Vice-Chair

Transportation, Public Safety,
and Veterans and Military affairs



JOINT COMMITTEES

Joint Audit Committee, Co-Chair
Joint Committee on Information Policy
and Technology

**TO: Members of the Committee on Energy, Consumer Protection and
Government Reform**
FROM: Senator Robert Cowles
DATE: March 4, 2014
RE: Senate Bill 644

Senate Bill 644 modernizes and standardizes the state statutes related to clerk duties, safeguards checks and balances within county government, ensures adequate staffing and increases accountability for election duties and information.

The bill comprehensively addresses a number of responsibilities and duties of a county clerk, establishing standard practices for the oversight of elections and election information; additionally, modernizing record-keeping and record storage practices. As the Executive Director of the Government Accountability Board serves as the Chief Election Officer of the State, the bill asserts that the county clerk serve as the Chief Election Officer of their respective county. In the case of Milwaukee County being the only county with an assigned election commission, the county clerk will serve as the Executive Director of the Commission to maintain standard practices with the rest state.

Furthermore, the bill acknowledges more modern record-keeping methods and systems. This provision allows county clerk offices to take advantage of cost-saving technological advances such as electronic record storage and best-practices procedures while maintaining the accountability necessary to maintain the numerous records required by law.

Senate Bill 644 addresses concerns that were raised during the public hearing for the Assembly version of this bill, AB 613. This bill, as written, incorporates the provisions of Assembly Amendment 2 to AB 613. I would like to thank Rep. Bernier for her leadership on this issue, as well as the hard work of the Wisconsin County Clerks Association and the Wisconsin Counties Association for making this compromise bill possible.



COUNTY OF MANITOWOC

COUNTY CLERK

1010 South 8th St., Ste. 115
Manitowoc, WI 54220

Jamie J. Aulik
Manitowoc County Clerk

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March 4, 2014

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Energy, Consumer Protection, and Government Reform:

SB-644 is a comprehensive reform bill which seeks to update and clarify statutory duties within county government, standardize duties across the state and increase accountability, and ensure proper checks and balances within county government.

Clerks are an integral part of the check and balance structure of county government. In the relationship between the legislative and executive branch, the clerk's office is Switzerland. But with part-time, citizen- servant legislators, we also have an important duty to serve as a check within the executive branch, and ensure that proper care is being taken with people's hard earned tax money. Also, ensuring that minutes are standardized and centrally located accomplishes a more open and accessible government to our constituents.

I am a firm believer that through voting, the accountability mechanism for county election officials works. Last election cycle, four county clerks were defeated by challengers, and one famously chose not to run. The reasons for their defeat varies (as you know, all politics is local), but in our state, people have the right to directly choose who provides these important services, and statewide there shouldn't be a degree of separation between the people and their county election administrator.

County clerks are a focal point for election administration in each county, and every year there are frequent changes to election law. Elections are among the most important duties of our office, and it takes time to ensure we are well versed on the changes so we can train local election officials. If they are trained properly, that the legislature's intent can be carried out, and election procedures can be properly followed.

In sum, SB-644 would modernize, standardize, and clarify the duties of the county clerk's office, while maintaining appropriate checks and balances and accountability in county government.

Thank you for your consideration on this bill and I respectfully ask for your support.

Wisconsin County Clerks Association

President - Kathy Brandt, Marinette County

Legislative Committee Chair – Jamie J. Aulik, Manitowoc County

Legislative Committee Vice-Chair – Joe Czarnezki, Milwaukee County

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SB-644

Updating and modernizing county clerk duties, increasing accountability in local government

SB-644 **empowers county clerks to innovate** and deliver services in an efficient and cost-effective manner. Also, by having county clerks serve as independently elected election administrators in every county, the proposal standardizes and brings accountability to election operations.

- **Modernizing local government and empowering innovation:**
 - Updates statutes to include the major duties of the office.
 - Enables clerks to perform their jobs in 2014, not 1955. Updates include giving officials the flexibility to store official records in different formats, such as electronic format, which helps reduce cost.
 - Increases transparency and public access to government by collecting and disseminating email addresses of all officials serving in tax districts.

- **Standardizing election duties statewide and increasing accountability:**
 - Recognizes the county clerk as a focal point for election administration in the county, and creates the title of “Chief Election Officer of the County” and delineates duties associated with the title.
 - Standardizes election administration statewide by making the independently elected Milwaukee County Clerk accountable for election operations while maintaining the Milwaukee Board of Election Commissioner’s structure.
 - Increases accountability by having an elected official supervising duties similar to every other clerk in the state.

- **Safeguard checks and balances within county government:**
 - As independently elected officials, county clerks assure adequate checks and balances in his/her unit of local government. The clerk should oversee the clerical duties not only for the county board as a whole, but also for committees where fiscal and policymaking decisions are made but may not require action of the full county board.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Energy, Consumer Protection, and Government Reform

FROM: Sarah Diedrick-Kasdorf, Deputy Director of Government Affairs 

DATE: March 4, 2014

SUBJECT: Support for Senate Bill 644

The Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA) supports Senate Bill 644, which makes several statutory changes related to the office of county clerk.

WCA opposed Senate Bill 644's companion bill (Assembly Bill 613) when it was first introduced in the Assembly due to language in the bill related to the appointment of a full-time equivalent deputy clerk "to work exclusively in the clerk's office" and to be removed only by the clerk. WCA also had concerns related to the clerk's access to financial records in counties where the position of auditor has been created.

Assembly Amendment 2 to Assembly Bill 613 addresses WCA's concerns and, as a result, WCA now supports Assembly Bill 613 if Assembly Amendment 2 is adopted. Senate Bill 644 was drafted as a companion to Assembly Bill 613 with the amendment language included; therefore, WCA supports Senate Bill 644.

WCA believes Senate Bill 644 accomplishes a number of significant policy changes, including:

- Clarifying language to require the county clerk to create the agenda for county board meetings, under the direction of the county board chair or committee chair, and to file in the clerk's office copies of agendas and minutes of board and committee meetings. WCA believes this will simplify many open records issues.
- Modernizing statutory language to eliminate references to keeping board and committee proceedings and other records in a "book" and repealing other obsolete provisions of current law.
- Reaffirming the clerk's status as the chief election officer of the county.
- Adding information that local government officials must provide to the county clerk to facilitate citizen contact with local officials.

WCA thanks Rep. Bernier and the Wisconsin County Clerks Association for their willingness to address WCA's concerns with this legislation. WCA also thanks Senator

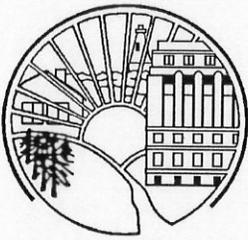
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Cowles for introducing the Senate companion with the hope that this important legislation makes its way through the process in the final days of session.

WCA respectfully requests your support for Senate Bill 644.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Please feel free to contact WCA for additional information.



SHEBOYGAN COUNTY CLERK

Jon Dolson

County Clerk

March 4, 2014

Wisconsin State Senate
Committee on Energy, Consumer Protection and Government Reform

Re: SB 644

Dear Committee Chair and Members,

Clarification is needed in the state statutes regarding the role of the county clerk and SB 644 will help, if passed. Over the past thirty years, in many counties within Wisconsin, county clerk duties have been slowly eaten away. It doesn't happen all at once but, I feel we are incrementally creeping towards a tipping point where legislators will look statewide; see the number of hollowed out clerk's offices, and then ask themselves "Why do we even need a county clerk?" Representative Bernier, a former county clerk as some of you know, will tell you that she has been asked that very question by other legislators. Here is our chance to say, this is why you need a county clerk. Because we are important in the checks and balances structure of county government, we are the focal point for election administration in our counties, and as independently elected officials we perform oversight without fear of retribution.

On elections, being possibly the most important role of the county clerk, the statute's only reference to election duties in our "job description" is found in 59.23 (2)(n) Taxes: election duties. "*Perform all duties that are imposed on the clerk in relation to the assessment and collection of taxes, and to the preparation and distribution of ballots and the canvass and return of votes at general, judicial, and special elections.*" That's it. A single (39) word sentence. Elections are nearly a throwaway line, grouped in with taxes. If that doesn't illustrate that this section covering county clerk duties has not been touched in many years, well, I simply don't know what does.

In effect, SB 644 seeks to clearly state, "This is what a county clerk is and does in 2014". It clarifies and vests duties in our office so no one else can strip them away. As one can plainly see, the original version of this bill was cosigned by (11) Senators and (43) Representatives. That fact alone shows that there is overwhelming agreement that change is overdue.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jon G. Dolson

On January 28 The Assembly Committee on State Affairs and Government Operations held a public hearing on this AB 613. Unfortunately, the Milwaukee County Election Commission was not contacted to be available to appear and share our views.

I bring a partial answer to a question posed by the committee regarding why the City and County of Milwaukee have election commissions while the rest of the state does not. I shall attempt to put the Commission itself in a historical context.

The Milwaukee County Election Commission has existed in substantially its current form since 1915. Let me emphasize that to you – the Wisconsin Statutes, for the past 100 years, has separated the task of administering elections from any individuals directly affected by those elections in the most populous city and county of our state.

I am not one to advocate for keeping useless traditions. However the fact of such a long standing tradition should make this body and the assembly pause before eliminating it.

As a citizen commission, we provide oversight to ensure transparency. We have no personal interest in the outcome of any election since we cannot serve in any public office (except as notary public). The commission provides both major parties a guarantee of at least representative to protect the interests of the *minority party*.

Of course, none of that explains why Milwaukee, City and County, should end up being treated differently than everyone else. Indeed, at some point in history, I expect the intention was that every city/county that reached a certain population size would join us in separating administration of elections from the power of elected officials.

In 1915, the qualifying population began at 100,000. Some years later it increased to 200,000. In 1967, the target number increased to 500,000 where it has remained for these past almost 50 years. At this moment I can only imagine why the number kept increasing. Given the fact the legislature is considering an amendment to raise the target again, I assume at various points in history county clerks in other locations wanted to maintain their power over elections and petitioned for the change.

Several months ago I attended a hearing on a bill to limit early in person voting hours. One thing that was explicitly stated in that hearing, and an attitude I have experienced in rural parts of the state, is dissatisfaction that Milwaukee gets special treatment. I wonder if part of that special treatment is due to laws being changed any time another county or city begins to reach a threshold such as is happening here.

At some point this threshold creep needs to stop. At some point we need to recognize that it's a bad idea for a major population center to have its elections run by an elected official. For Dane County that means joining Milwaukee County by having a bi-partisan citizen commission administering elections. In Milwaukee County, that means keeping authority out of the hands of an elected county clerk. For both of these reasons I, as an election commissioner and citizen, ask you to reject this bill.

Lillian Cheesman, Milwaukee County Election Commissioner

My name is Nancy Penn and I am the Chair of the Milwaukee County Election Commission.

I came here today to ask you to remove changes to Chapter 12 Section 3 7.21 (2) (lines 13 to 19) from Bill 644.

It is my understanding that this recommendation was made due to dissatisfaction with the performance of the previous (Executive Director) Administrator and previous Election Commission. Since then, the Administrator resigned and a new Commission has been appointed. The new Commission is fully engaged group of professionals consisting of a person with 25 years of human resources and management experience, an attorney and a man with an extensive background in business management. We meet bi-weekly and actively participates in the management of the Election Commission.

In addition we work closely with the County Executive, the Comptroller's Office Human Resources, the County Clerk and Human Resources to avoid future problems and to instill confidence in the Election Commission. We have upgraded the position which was classified as an Administrative Assistant to an Executive Director and are currently recruiting for a high level professional to run the department efficiently and effectively. Working with other Milwaukee County department the Election Commission can no longer function like an island.

We are working on writing standard operating practices, improving our website, and our overall performance. The change in the bill is **no longer necessary**.

That being said, the proposed change to this section has the unintended consequence it

Under current law the county board of election commissioners hires the executive director who performs whatever duties the board of election commissioners assigns to him or her. The "Appointment and removal of the executive Director shall be subject to civil service standards."

The proposed bill states that the county clerk shall serve as the Executive Director. "The Clerk shall perform whatever duties the board of election commissioners assigns to him or her."

This change will actually cause a lack of **accountability**.

Under the new proposal the Election Commission would have the right to give the County Clerk directives, but if problems should arise the Election Commission would have no authority to hold the County Clerk responsible for those problems. The County Clerk is elected by the will of the people and therefore is accountable to his or constituents.

The proposed change would also make the management of Elections and the Election Commission unnecessarily difficult by introducing uncertainty.

Our present County Clerk is very capable and is extremely knowledgeable, but a future County Clerk may not be, which cause for concern is. The County Clerk is elected every four years and candidates have no eligibility requirements except be an eligible elector

Nancy Penn, 1205 S. 64th Street, West Allis, WI 53214, 414-774-6503

of the County and be 18 years of age. A newly elected County Clerk would probably have no election experience.

An Executive Director appointed by the Election Commission is a more permanent solution and is subject to civil service rules so that person can be held accountable. There is a learning curve for the position of Executive Director and this position has an enormous amount of responsibility which warrants a professional who is dedicated to the mission of the election commission.

An Inconsistency

The Bill only changes the structure of the Milwaukee County Election Commission but does not make the City Clerk of Milwaukee the Executive Director of their Election Commission.

Other Considerations

The County Executive should have the authority to remove and replacing the Commissioners if we are unable or unwilling to perform the job.



**MILWAUKEE COUNTY
JOB DESCRIPTION**

Job Title: Election Commission Executive Director
Department: Election Commission
Location: Milwaukee County Courthouse, WI, 53233
Status: Full-time
FLSA Status: Exempt
EEO-1 Job Category: Executive/Senior Level Officials
Pay Range: \$61,668.25 - \$90,274.91

Job Summary: Responsible for oversight and management of the department; develop and monitor budget; administer Wisconsin election and campaign finance laws; manage and coordinate all aspects of the election process, media relations and intergovernmental relations (state and municipal); work with elected officials, municipal clerks, candidates, and the general public; and administer all elections with a fair, honest, objective and neutral approach.

Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

- Perform day-to-day oversight and administration of department operations, including all aspects of staff training and supervision, approval of payroll and budget; provide updates to Election Commission and coordinates Election Commission meetings;
- Design and proofread ballots; coordinate ballot printing and electronic programming of voting machines with vendors; prepare election notifications; deliver election supplies to municipalities; oversee record retention; store and destroy ballots as required by law;
- Serves as a resource to municipal clerks, school district clerks, elected officials, candidates for public office and the general public regarding election information, voter registration and procedures in accordance with Wisconsin Statutes, Chapters 5 – 12;
- Supervise staff in the review, reconciliation and entry of election results in the State's Canvass reporting system. Coordinate signing of official election results by Election Commissioner; troubleshoot and resolve any discrepancies;
- Oversee staff review of candidate nomination papers; review challenges filed against candidates and prepare written filings; coordinate Election Commission Appeal Hearings;
- Attend periodic training & certification by the Wisconsin Government Accountability Board (GAB). Maintain certification during incumbency; provide Chief Inspector Training for municipalities and newly appointed municipal clerks; provide ongoing staff training;
- Coordinate recount and recall elections for all municipalities including ballot preparation and distribution, scheduling and logistics for such elections;
- Ensure campaign finance reports are distributed to candidates; analyze and verify submitted reports are accurate and filed in a timely manner; refer non-compliant candidates to the DA's office;
- Design and conduct new voter education; promote community awareness of elections; provide media and general public with information on voting procedures, voting rights and new voting technology;
- Other duties as assigned;
- Regular attendance is required.

Minimum Education & Years of Experience Required: Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, Business Management, Political Science or related field with three (3) or more years of experience in municipal government or program administration and general office supervision OR Associate's Degree in Business Administration, Business Management, Political Science or related field with five (5) or more years of experience in municipal government or program administration and general office supervision.

Required License: Wisconsin Driver's License.

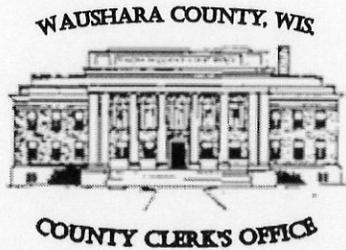
Preferred Certifications: Registration as a Notary Public; Wisconsin Government Accountability Board (GAB) Certified Chief Inspector Trainer and Municipal Clerk Trainer; Special Registration Deputy appointment (by the GAB to register voters).

Required Skills and Abilities:

- Frequent internal and external communication; building strong working relationships internally and externally; high degree of authority in securing understanding and cooperation of multiple departments or interests.
- Read, write, and comprehend routine reports, procedures, and/or government regulations with high level of accuracy. Speak effectively before both internal and external groups. Prepare and present written communications pertaining to complex subjects.
- Complex work generally governed by broad instructions, standard policies, procedures and objectives usually involving frequent changes.
- Major responsibility for decisions and final recommendation, which may result in the formulation of strategic plans of action to achieve the broad objectives for the organization.

Working Conditions:

- **Physical Demands:** Sitting, Hearing, Talking, Visual, Typing, Lifting fifty (50) pounds and Carrying fifty (50) pounds.
- **Non-Physical Demands:** Analysis/Reasoning, Communication/Interpretation, Math/Mental Computation, Reading, Sustained Mental Activity (auditing, problem solving, grant writing, composing reports) and Writing.
- **Environmental Demands:** Tedious/Exacting Work
- **Other Demands/ Deadlines:** Exposure to demands and pressures from persons other than immediate supervisor; regular direct contacts with distressed individuals; and high volume of variable work demands and deadlines impose strain on routine basis or considerable stress intermittently.



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To: Senate Committee on Energy, Consumer Protection, and Government Reform

Date: March 4, 2014

Re: SB-644 'County Clerk Duties' Bill

Honorable Chairman Cowles and Committee Members:

Thank you for holding a public hearing on Senate Bill 644, which proposes to clarify and modernize county clerks' duties. Passage of SB-644 will empower this more than 150-year-old constitutional office to serve in its vital role efficiently and effectively for years to come. For while times have changed since the office of county clerk was created, the need for this independently elected officer has not changed.

In recent years there has been an effort in some counties to transfer clerks' duties to other administrative offices, often by exploiting gray areas in the statutes. For example: Chapter 59.23 (2) (a) states that the county clerk shall "act as clerk of the board," specifying that clerks must take meeting minutes and keep other board records. However, nothing is explicitly said about creating county board agendas or distributing meeting materials. As a result of this statutory gray area, some administration offices claim these unspecified duties, then use the extra work as justification to grow their staffs and cut county clerk staff.

If erosion of our responsibilities continues, eventually the public will rightfully question why we're needed at all. And we are needed every bit as much now as when our constitutional offices were created. Wisconsin's founders intended that the citizenry decide who oversees their finances, administers their elections, and keeps their records. We are accountable to the public as a whole; not just to the county board or an administrator. This makes us especially valuable in safeguarding checks and balances in county government.

Help us to continue fulfilling these important roles by not only clarifying our duties, but also updating them so they can be performed in the 21st century.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Melanie R. Stake

COUNTY CLERK

BROWN COUNTY

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P.O. BOX 23600
GREEN BAY, WI 54305-3600

SANDRA L. JUNO
COUNTY CLERK

PHONE (920) 448-4016 FAX (920) 448-4498

juno_sl@co.brown.wi.us

March 4, 2014

Regarding: In support of SB-644

Members of the Senate:

I am unable to attend today's hearing but I would like to have my testimony added to the record on SB-644.

I applaud your leadership in sponsoring, supporting and holding a public hearing on this proposal which is important to the operations and management of a County Clerk's Office. In updating these State Statutes, our laws will be reflective of the requirements necessary to effectively perform the duties and responsibilities of the County Clerk's Office in the twenty-first century. A County Clerk is granted authority in Wisconsin's Constitution that he or she has a legal obligation to ensure the Clerk's Office has adequate resources to perform duties and provide services to their constituency.

One of the greatest challenges a County Clerk faces today is meeting Budget levy limits as directed by their executive and legislative bodies. In governments, resources are always tight and we are asked year after year to cut maintenance and operations costs and/or reduce staffing levels. This is a tough balancing act because many of the duties and responsibilities performed in the County Clerk's Office are state and federal unfunded mandates especially as they relate to elections.

County Clerks take an oath of office to perform the duties of office to the best of their abilities. A County Clerk understands the financial needs, legal requirements, and work load demands of the office. A Clerk is put in a delicate situation to find ways to be innovative to provide the mandated services using the least amount of resources possible.

Hence, adequate staffing in the County Clerk's Office is especially critical business. Staff's long term constancy, work experience, continuing education, and ongoing training are required to effectively implement and fulfill our ever increasing roles in State and Federal elections. Not only are Counties mandated to bear the costs of elections; we are likewise mandated to follow the state and federal laws and

policies set forth by the legislature, Government Accountability Board, Elections Assistance Commission, municipal governments, school districts, and various other agencies and institutions.

Thus, it is essential that a County Clerk have at least one full-time deputy to support the vast array of work performed under the direction of the County Clerk. These duties include but are not limited to County Board matters, contracts, licensing, elections, statewide voter registration, administrative duties, and other responsibilities. Moreover, a full time deputy provides for continuity of services in the absence of the Clerk as well. SB-644 supports at least one full-time deputy per County. It is crucial for the County Clerk's office to be properly staffed for the protection of the mandated duties and responsibilities which are legally required of the Office. The passage of SB-644 does not prevent a deputy from assisting another County office or department; but, to do so would require the approval of the County Clerk.

Another important aspect of this bill is that it reinforces the County Clerk's role in attending to County Board matters and working directly with the County Board Chairman. It expounds on the accommodating duties of the County Clerk and County Board for preparing and filing agenda, minutes, and legal records. In Brown County, we have had 2 separate offices for several years and over that time Brown County has experienced increasing budget costs to support two separate offices and equipment, a duplication of records, wrong direction of committee action and processes, lost records and documents, resolutions and ordinances that are not in their proper format, and a variety of communication mishaps and errors. Upon passage of SB-644, this bill could support Brown County's need to combine two offices into one for overall efficiency, effectiveness, and savings.

Members of the Senate, I hope you will move this bill forward which will modernize the County Clerk's Office and empower County government; standardize statewide election duties with increasing authority to effectively fulfill the requirements; safeguard the inherent checks and balances in County government; and ensure that a County Clerk's Office is adequately staffed to meet demands of the office and provide service to our constituencies.

Thank you for allowing my testimony to be added to the record.

/s/ Sandy Juno

Sandra L. Juno
Brown County Clerk